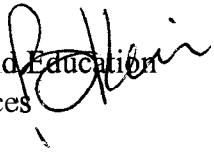




TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AUSTIN, TEXAS
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Directors
Directors, Local Health Departments
Directors, Independent WIC Local Agencies
Herman Horn, Chief, Bureau of Regional/Local Health Operations

FROM: Barbara Keir, Director
Public Health Nutrition and Education
Bureau of Nutrition Services 

DATE: July 7, 2000

SUBJECT: World Breastfeeding Month Press Release and Promotional Ideas

August is World Breastfeeding Month, soon to be designated as Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Texas by Gov. George Bush. Texas WIC is using the theme **“Mother’s Milk: Don’t Start Life Without It.”**

Many of you are planning activities in your clinics and communities to honor breastfeeding mothers and to bring to the attention of your community the health benefits of breastfeeding. To assist you in your breastfeeding-promotion efforts, we have attached the following:

- list of ideas you may want to implement during August
- sample press release to customize on your letterhead with your own activities to give to your local media
- instructions for utilizing the press release

A breastfeeding lesson, using this year’s theme, will be sent to all local agencies before August 1. A copy of the governor’s proclamation will be mailed to you as soon as we receive it. You may wish to make minor changes to the information in the proclamation to create a proclamation for your local mayor, city council or county commissioners to sign.

For any questions about breastfeeding or World Breastfeeding Day events, contact Laurie Coker, Breastfeeding Promotion Specialist, or Tracy Erickson, WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, at (512) 458-7444.

Attachments

August is World Breastfeeding Month
Year 2000 Texas WIC Theme:
Mother's Milk: Don't Start Life Without It!

Supportive Materials:

- *Bilingual Poster - "Mother's Milk: Don't Start Life Without It!"
- Ref rigerator Magnets - "How to Tell If Your Newborn is Getting Enough To Eat"
- *Pregnancy Pocket Calendars from Channing-Bete with theme printed on cover
- @Bilingual Child's Coloring Book: "Ways I Can Help Mommy With the New Baby"
- **Sample** bulletin board ideas
- *Sample press release
- @Governor's proclamation

Innovative Ideas from State and Local WIC Agencies:

Have a breastfeeding shower for pregnant WIC clients. Invite local pro-breastfeeding pediatricians and **OB/Gyn's** and pediatric nurses to attend to answer participants' questions. Ask local businesses to donate maternity items as shower gifts. Have a child's coloring contest, using "Ways I can help Mommy with the new baby" books.

Decorate your clinic waiting rooms, libraries and civic buildings with World Breastfeeding posters and bulletin boards honoring breastfeeding moms. Put World Breastfeeding coloring books in waiting rooms in WIC clinics and doctors' offices.

Send press release of your World Breastfeeding Month events to your local paper.

Ask local businesses, grocery stores, malls, hospitals, birthing centers, doctors' off ices, churches, to display World Breastfeeding posters in their windows.

Hold health booths, fairs and presentations in malls, schools and community groups, explaining the benefits of breastfeeding and where moms get information and support.

Inform health professionals, students, teachers and employers of the TDH breastfeeding web site address: <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/lactate/bf l.htm>

Let Us Know What You Did!

Please mail descriptions and photos of events to Ms. Wendy Hazelwood, TDH , 1100 W. 49th, Austin, TX 78756 or faxing information to Ms. Hazelwood at (512) 406-7442.

Utilizing Press Release **for** World Breastfeeding Month

1. Customize the sample press release on your letterhead with your own activities to give to your local media. After you have localized the press release on your own letterhead, place it in a folder or 9x12 envelope.
2. If you can, hand-deliver this packet to your local newspapers, radio stations and TV stations. If you have a relationship with reporters in any of these media, call them first and let them know you're coming. The best time to call the media is mid-morning or early afternoon; the worst time is late afternoon.

If you cannot hand-deliver the packet, send it to the lifestyle editor (or managing editor on smaller papers) at newspapers and to news directors of radio and TV stations.

3. A few days after you deliver or mail the packet, call the editors/news directors and ask if they received it and if you can answer any questions they may have -- about WIC, about breastfeeding, about World Breastfeeding Day. Be prepared to explain everything that you gave them in the press release about World Breastfeeding Day.

A word of caution: Remember that ANYTHING you say to an editor or reporter may be quoted, so be careful of what you say -- and be polite, even if they are not.

4. Timing is important. You don't want to give them information too early, or it will get lost as they "hold" it to run closer to the event. Two weeks before the event is ideal. One week is cutting it close, but it's not impossible to get coverage.

July 17, 2000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: _____ at (____) _____ - _____
(Breastfeeding coordinator or director) (phone number)

August Is World Breastfeeding Month

Name of local agency or clinic site

Address

(City)

(State)

will celebrate World Breastfeeding Day Aug. 1, 2000, with

(events or activities)

from: _____ **at:** _____
(time) (location)

The celebration marks the beginning of World Breastfeeding Month 2000, an annual campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of breastfeeding. The campaign is sponsored by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) in conjunction with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, La **Leche** League International and the Texas Department of Health.

“Mother’s Milk: **Don’t** Start Life Without It,” the theme of the Texas’ campaign, will focus on the health benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of giving babies this healthy beginning. Breastmilk gives newborn infants instant protection against infection.

Three years ago, Dr. William R. Archer III, Texas Commissioner of Health, appointed the Texas Breastfeeding Initiative to have 75 percent of all Texas infants breastfeeding at hospital discharge and 50 percent still breastfeeding when they are

6 months old. "Current Texas breastfeeding rates are 64 percent at hospital discharge and only 29 percent at 6 months."

The Texas Position Statement on Infant Feeding, a collaborative effort of Texas health-related organizations, consumers and professionals strongly supports breastfeeding as the optimal way to feed infants. The Texas Department of Health and more than 32 other health organizations and insurance companies have endorsed this position statement. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding the first 6 months of life and continuation of breastfeeding for the first year of a baby's life or longer.

Doctor Archer **said the benefits of breastfeeding include:**

- . Breastfed babies tend to have fewer ear infections, **incidences** of diarrhea, lung infections and infections of the spine or brain (meningitis).
- . Breastfeeding helps a baby's teeth and jaw grow correctly.
- . Breastmilk may help decrease a baby's chance of getting certain childhood cancers such as leukemia.
- . Breastmilk may help decrease a baby's chance of getting lifelong diseases such as early-onset diabetes and long-term digestive problems.
- . Breastmilk may help delay or prevent the onset of allergies and can reduce the severity of asthma and skin problems such as eczema.
- . Breastfeeding may help the growth of the baby's brain. Some studies have shown that children who were breastfed as babies scored higher on IQ tests than children who were not breastfed.
- . Babies fed mother's milk tend to develop their eyesight sooner and score better on eyesight tests than babies who were not breastfed. This is especially true for babies born early.
- . Mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis.

August 1, 2000, marks the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding, which recognizes the importance of breastfeeding to infant and maternal health as well as the social, economic and ecological benefits it provides to the family and society.

The declaration, adopted in 1990 by 32 governments and 10 United Nations agencies, states: "As a global goal for optimal maternal and child health and nutrition, all women should be enabled to practice exclusive breastfeeding, and all infants should be fed exclusively on breastmilk from birth to 4 to 6 months of age. Thereafter, children should continue to breastfeed while receiving appropriate and adequate complementary foods for up to 2 years of age or beyond. This child feeding ideal is to be achieved by creating an appropriate environment of awareness and support so that women can benefit in this manner."

WIC clinics across the state have been provided with promotional materials. These materials will be displayed and distributed at local WIC clinics to honor breastfeeding clients and educate pregnant women about breastfeeding.